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Little ~ Bunny
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art doll

Pattern and design by Áine James Macargee

Information

This instructional PDF is intended to be viewed on a screen, there are no specific patterns to be printed nor was this formatted to be printer-friendly. No bunny will be made the same, each is unique and sweet in their own precious way. This document will always be FREE for non-commercial use. I do not intend to sell or make profit from these dolls nor do I care to. If you are an independent artist and wish to sell these dolls after creating your own or inspired by, then please do! I only ask that you love them kindly and provide good homes- they need it terribly and will appreciate you greatly. For any questions or concerns, you can hiss the villain by tying a letter to a raven's leg.



Materials

❖ Sewing

- Sewing machine with stretch stitch
- Sewing needles for hand stitching
- Thread, scissors, ruler, etc
- Felting needle
- Buttons for eyes
- Thicker embroidery thread or thinner yarn for the mouth

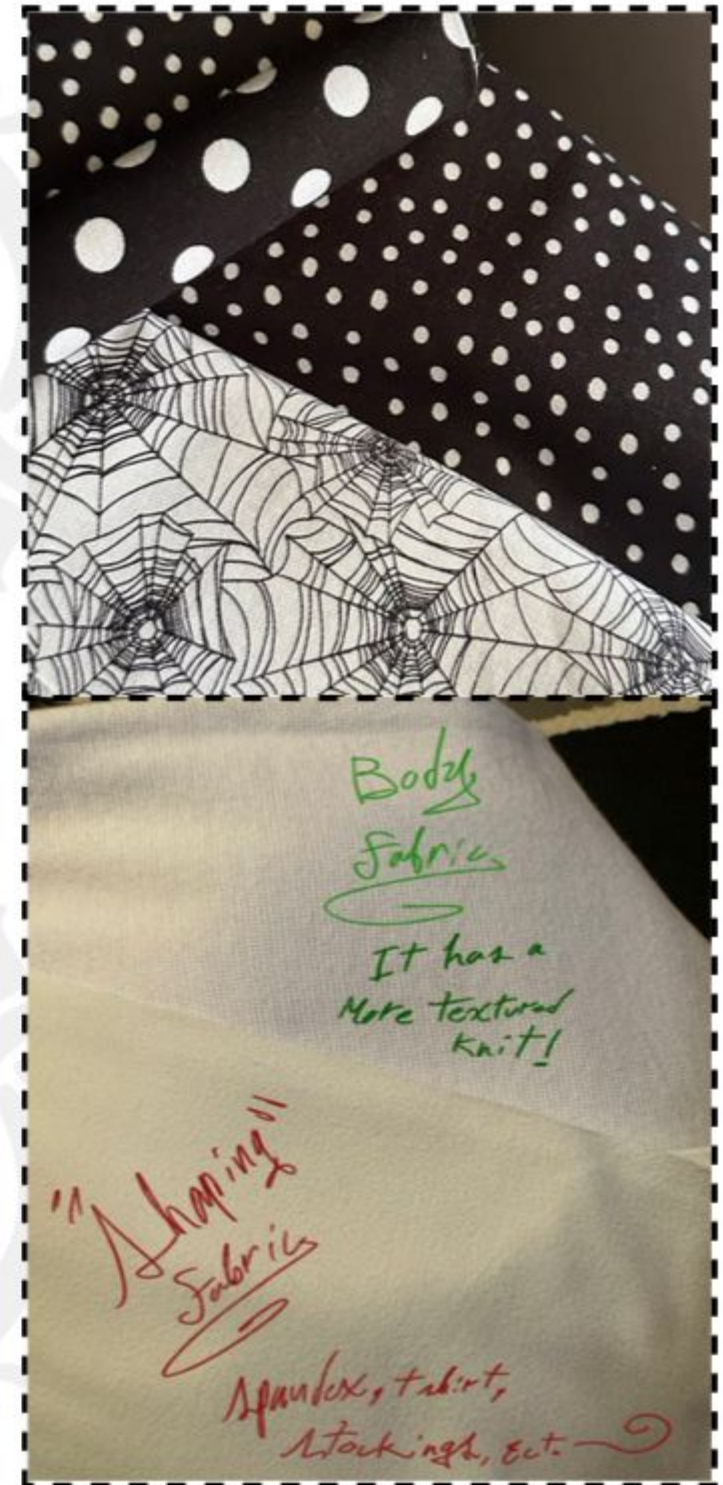
❖ Soft Things

- Quilt batting (or any batting, so long as it can be needle felted!)
- Regular fluff/stuffing/filling

❖ Fabrics

- Pretty fabric for the clothing
- Textured knitted fabric for skin
- Any stretchy fabric (Spandex, stockings, pantyhose, etc) for shaping the head.

- In the second image to the right, the written text in green reads: "Body fabric, it has a more textured knit!" The second text, written in red, reads "Shaping fabric. Spandex, t-shirt, stockings, etc." While I have not personally used a t-shirt (rayon- or spandex-blend) or stockings for waldorf shaping, I can imagine that any *lightweight* fabric with a stretch can work! The fabric I am using was purchased by the yard at Joanne fabrics in the apparel section, I believe it was a jersey knit.
- You can use whichever fabric you prefer for the skin, but I find myself partial to the textured knit!



Head

The head is made with Waldorf techniques, blending needle felting with fabrics. While I will explain how to achieve the bunny shape, other resources can help if needed. I found these particular videos to be greatly helpful!

- ❖ Wild Willow Dolls, "How to make a Waldorf Doll Head - Tutorial by Wild Willow Dolls"
> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fjOMGZxeU-U&feature=youtu.be>
- ❖ Fig and Me, "Dollmaking: Needle Felting a Doll Face - Sneak Peek for Natural Fiber Art Dolls"
> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WA6Y1fCs5U>

Prepare the batting (quilt batting was used!) by cutting it into long strips. Gently tug at the edges of the batting, loosening it from the fibers but not tearing apart.

Cut an arms length of batting from your strip and put a tie in the middle. Don't tighten it, but gently pull it into the start of a ball. Now you will take this ball and continue wrapping it with the long strips of batting, occasionally needle felting as you go along (especially on dramatic curves) to secure it in place. Don't wrap tightly and not too loose! Everything that you are doing will be squished by a tight-fitting tube of fabric, so don't fret too terribly over lumps either because it will all smooth out.



After wrapping and working at the batting, I had a ball of about 3 inches. When you reach your desired size, get a few more strips of batting and lay them atop of each other (almost like the shape of an asterisk *). Set your ball in the middle and gently fold up the strips with your beautiful hands. Now you have a stem, which acts as the neck. Needle felt around to secure it in place.



The next step for creating the head is to cut your first bit of fabric! For this, we will use the *shaping fabric*, described in the **Materials** section to be spandex, a very stretchy t-shirt, or stockings; but not the textured knit used for the skin! This fabric will not be visible, however choosing a color that matches the skin of your bunny is preferred as having a contrasting or patterned fabric may cause it to show up beneath. This is the first and only time that we use the shaping fabric, all other fabric beyond this point will use the *skin* and/or the pretty fabric of your choice.

- ❖ Cut a *RECTANGLE* on a fold. This rectangle should be the size of the ball, with extra length on the top and bottom, but no wider and without accounting seam allowance. You want this to fit over the head with a bit of tightness!
- ❖ Use the *stretch stitch* on your sewing machine to sew a straight line lengthwise. Keep the bottom and top open.
- ❖ Turn your tube inside-out, then pull it over the ball like a sock.

With a threaded needle, go along the very top of the head and pull it together in a gather. Looks almost like a dumpling! Tuck in the raw edges as you pull it closed, as it helps it to lay flat.



The head, now with the top shut, will have a length of neck. It is important to keep this neck long and open, as it provides you with both grip and attachment for the body later on. With a pencil or preferred tool, mark a centerline evenly through. Then, with a needle and long length of thread, wrap around the head. Pull tightly and secure it as you go along, but don't force it so tightly that it becomes an hourglass; you want a nice, rounded head!

After deciding the front and center of the head, travel your needle along and use stitching to shape the two sides. For more definition, you can wrap your needle along the neck, but please do not do it tightly or close the neck, you need access to it for the next step!

With a running stitch, shape the bottom of the head as it reaches to the side. Stuff the front of the face with fluff, making it bigger. It may appear unshapely or large, but please remember that everything you're doing will be squished down by another layer of stretchy fabric that will contort it into a smooth shape.



Put a long stitch down the middle of the cheek. As you become happy with your head, start closing off the bottom neck. If this were a traditional Waldorf doll, more attention would have been given to the nose and mouth, however this is a very simple shape and the nose/mouth are instead embroidered. It is time to cut your skin fabric with the textured knit or stretchy fabric of your choice. Likewise to the shaping fabric, you want it to fit over tightly- however not so tight that it squeezes it.

The pattern for cutting the *skin* fabric is exactly the same as it was the *shaping* fabric:

- ❖ Cut a *RECTANGLE* on a fold. This rectangle should be the size of the head, with extra length on the top and bottom, but no wider and without accounting seam allowance. You want this to fit over the head with a bit of tightness!
- ❖ Use the *stretch stitch* on your sewing machine to sew a straight line lengthwise. Keep the bottom and top open.
- ❖ Turn your tube inside-out, then pull it over the head like a sock.



Just like the shaping fabric, gather the top of the head and neatly tuck it away flat. In Waldorf dolls, this part would be covered by yarn-hair, however we are not using yarn for this particular doll so it cannot be covered in that way. I use hats to hide it, but I can also imagine that a *modesty panel*, cut from a circle of the same fabric, could be delicately stitched into place and hide the puckering fabrics.

The next part of our adventure is to draw a face where the bunny's nose and mouth will go. If you wish, you can experiment with certain faces and expressions. I found that a *long* needle with thicker embroidery thread or lace weight yarn works well. I also suggest pulling up the bottommost neck layers of the fabric and starting/ending your needleworking there, as it hides the knotted ends in the fluff. The nose can be described as a sort of modified satin-stitch as it is difficult to navigate the needle on the curves, while the mouth is a running stitch. Just try to make it even and neat! It can be tricky, but the result is a cute face to pinch.

The last shaping stitch for the facial features is what I like to call a "*Neck stitch*" and it requires the longest needle you have, as you will thread your needle and drive it through from the bottommost of the neck up to the top, then pull it tight. This will better define the jaw and cheeks. But don't close up the neck, yet!

Having access to the inner neck will help with sewing eyes.



Eyes

The eyes of the bunny are made from buttons. Any size, design, or color can be used, however I personally prefer to use buttons that are black and flat. *Safety eyes* might work well, however I have no personal experience with them so I cannot say.

Just use whatever you think is best and will make you say "There she is!"

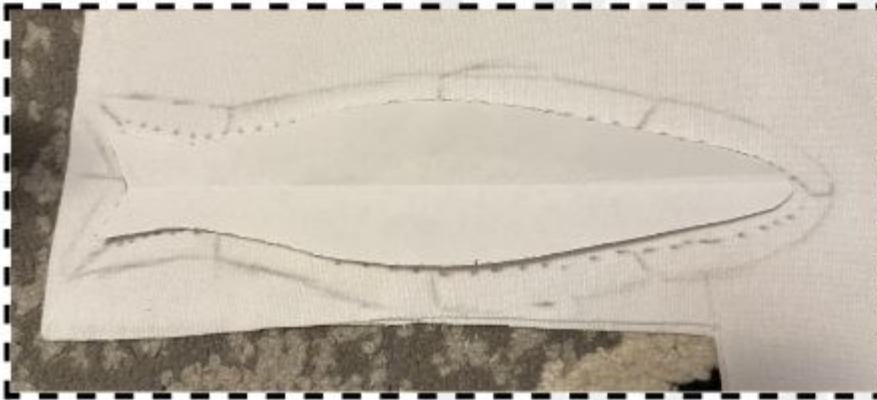


Ears

The ears are drafted by drawing a shape upon a piece of paper. I recommend folding the paper in half, drawing half of your shape, then cutting; this will make it an even, symmetrical shape. For this particular bunny, I made the ears a bit shorter than the others and the paper-cut pattern measured to be around 11 inches, with a width of 2 inches at the broadest. You can cut your pattern to be as long, narrow, floppy, or broad as you'd like!



- ❖ For cutting, it is very important to have a consistent seam allowance on all four pieces.
 - Four pieces will be cut in total. Two pieces will be cut from the knitted skin fabric, while the other two fabric pieces will make up the inner ear, so a pretty cotton fabric is preferred. I like to choose a fabric that will complement the bunny's outfit!
- ❖ Match one knitted fabric with one pretty fabric. Sew all along the marked lines, do *NOT* sew the bottommost curve shut, you need it opened for turning the ear inside-out



- ❖ Despite working with a stretchy fabric, I prefer to use a shorter non-stretch stitch on the machine for the ears.
- ❖ You can carefully notch curves and edges with a scissor or go along it with a pair of pinking shears; doing so will help it to lay flat as you turn it inside-out.
- ❖ Turn your ears inside-out. With an iron on a *LOW* heat setting, press your edges down nice and flat, then tuck in the bottommost part of the ear so that the raw edges are hidden.
- ❖ Topstitch along the ear, giving a nice finished look and a closed seam.



- ❖ Pin the ears to the sides of the head and hand-stitch them in place. I try to do a hidden ladder-stitch, but because it can be difficult to maneuver on the curves of the head, I instead do a sort of blend between overcast stitching and ladder stitching. I do both the front and back.



Body

The finished body of the bunny is about 10 inches round and made from a *RECTANGLE* cut on a fold, with the inner stuffing made from needle-felted batting.

- ❖ On a fold of knitted skin fabric, measure 7-10 inches lengthwise and 4 inches width.
 - Cut the fabric with seam allowance. Sew a straight stretch stitch lengthwise for a tube.
- ❖ Prepare the batting as it was described earlier for the head. Begin by cutting a long strip, tying at the middle, then begin rolling it. However, instead of a rounded ball, you want a more oval shape. Needle Felt for security as you go along.
 - As you reach your desired shape, try to create a "Well" at the top. This hole in the body will help you to attach the neck.



Little Bunny Art Doll ♥ Free Pattern



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- ❖ After creating your body (the estimated circumference is about 10-11 inches, with a height of 5-6 inches. It does not have to be exact!), stick the head into the hole. You can trim a bit of excess neck length if it is too much, but please keep it long!
- ❖ Needle felt along the neck, puncturing through the fabric as it sits in the well. You can also take a thinner strip of batting and needle felt as you wrap it along. Please be careful with your neck, as needle felting through the fabrics is not the most secure way of going about it but it is enough to hold it steady as we move onto the next part.
- ❖ OPTIONAL: You can cut out a small heart-shape with felt fabric and sew it into place.
 - Whatever you do, just don't break it because then she will be terribly sad.

Now it is time to put your tube, made of the knitted skin fabric, onto the body.

- ❖ Fold or tuck down the raw edges and then hand stitch a gather all along the neck, pulling it closed onto the bunny.
- ❖ Pin it into place then work a ladder-stitch or overcast stitch along the length, securing the head into place.
- ❖ The last thing to do is gather at the bottommost of the body, tucking in raw edges so it lays flat. Cut off excess if needed.



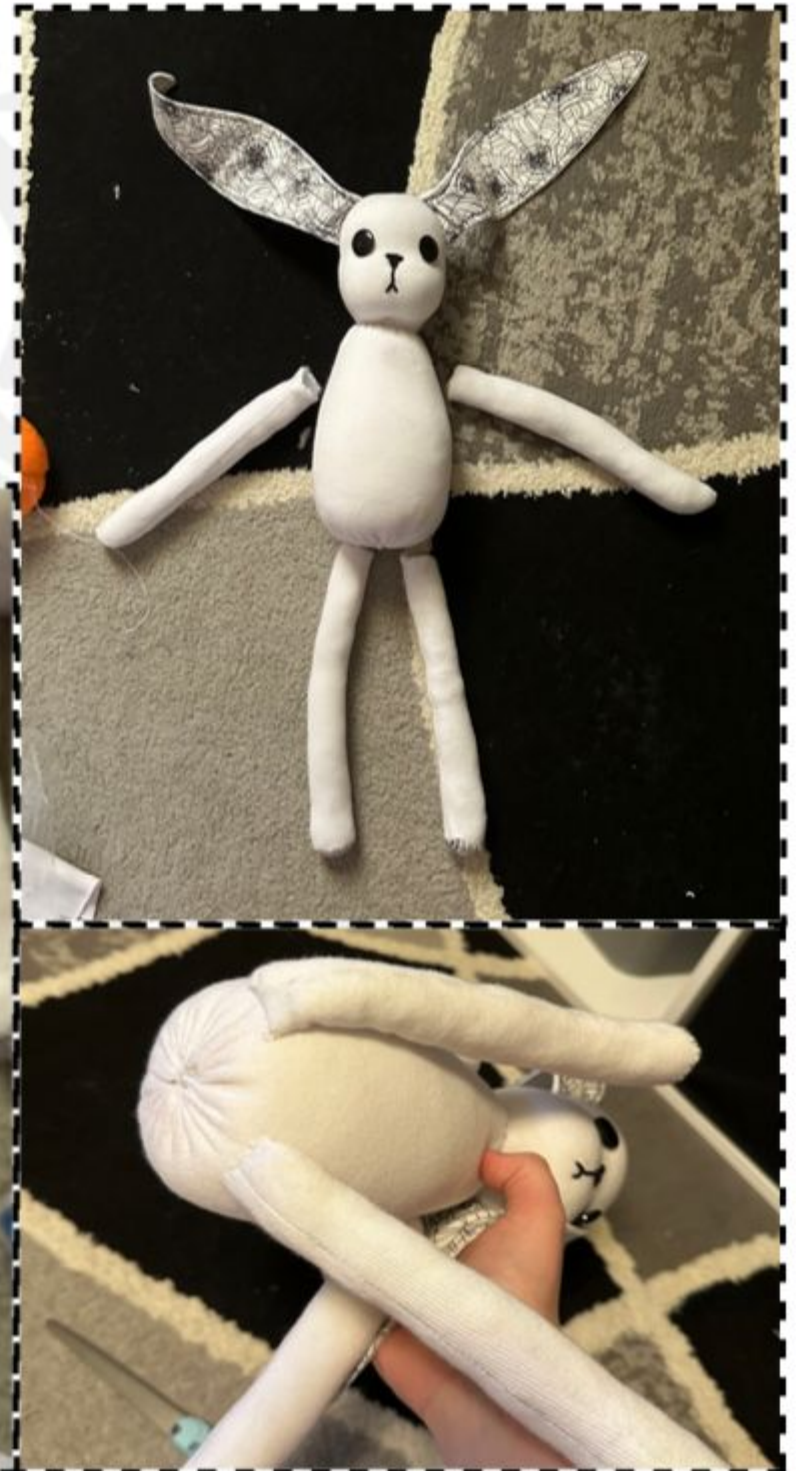
Limbs

The limbs are all cut the same size and with seam allowance added. The size I recommend is a rectangle of 7-8 inches lengthwise and 1 inch width cut on a fold. The only difference between the arms and legs is that the arms will have a curve for their hands (Like the PowerPuff Girls), while the legs have a circle of pretty fabric. However you can choose if you want all limbs to be curved, or all limbs to have a circle pad. If you choose to make the circle pads, it is *IMPORTANT* that you measure it accurately with a cylinder that can hold the fabric like a sock. More detail will be provided in due time.

- ❖ Cut a *RECTANGLE* on a fold of your knitted skin fabric, measured at 7-8 inches lengthwise and 1 inch wide with added seam allowance.
- ❖ With a 1 inch cylinder, cut a circle with generously added seam allowance.
- ❖ On the *ARMS*, mark a rounded curve on the bottoms of each, for the hands.
- ❖ On all four limbs, use a straight stretch stitch. The legs will be sewn into a tube, while the arms will be sewn with the curve.
- ❖ For the legs, pull it over the cylinder like a sock. Then put your circle on top like a hat. Sewing the circle onto the legs is a bit tricky, but the cylinder makes it a lot easier! Hand stitch all along the circumference with tight stitches or you can choose to stay-stitch it in place for then sewing on the machine. No matter what you choose, the cylinder keeps it evenly situated on top as you sew.



- ❖ When you finish sewing, the next step is to fill each of the limbs. No batting is used, just regular stuffing. Massage it through and make sure that it is evenly distributed. Don't overfill it because the knitted fabric will *consume* the stuffing, to mean that it will just keep filling up until it is stretched out.
- ❖ When attaching the arms, I like to fold in the raw edges at an angle. This will allow the arms to sit politely at the bunny's side or lap, rather than sticking straight out. The legs, however, are folded down straight.
 - For the legs, I like to attach them towards the front of the middle rather than the direct center of the bottom. This helps them to sit flat because they are "*Shelf Sitters*", to mean that they lack articulation and are made to sit on a shelf.



End

Your bunny is now complete and ready to be fashioned. While I will not provide a clothing tutorial, I will give advice that I hope will help you to make your own unique bunny! Also, for the sake of completion, here are the final measurements:

- ❖ Head: 1 inch round
- ❖ Body: 11 inch round
- ❖ Height: 16 inch, ears not included.

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Clothing Tips

- ❖ Sew on the flat
 - This means to do all of your hemming and attachments *BEFORE* stitching the side seams together.
- ❖ Practice stay stitching
 - Before you put things onto a machine, do a quick running stitch by hand. This can be especially helpful on small-scale projects, because you stitch things in place rather than pinning and you can be sure that you are doing a nice, even stitch all throughout.
- ❖ Don't be afraid to simplify or utilize darts in patterns.
 - This can be especially true in some historically-inspired ensembles, which are built up of finely tailored shapes of fabric to build a strong silhouette. Rather than sewing each individual piece of the pattern, you can achieve the same effect with smartly placed darts.
 - Cutting things on folds to reduce the amount of side seams that need to be sewed is helpful! Instead of cutting out four pieces of fabric for a pair of pants, cut a pant leg on a fold; this reduces the amount of side seams needed by two.
- ❖ Modify patterns
 - The completed bunny has an estimated height of 16 inches and circumference of 10 inches, so it is reasonable that most American Girl or porcelain doll patterns can be adjusted to fit the size of the bunny. Whatever you choose to do, I am sure that she will look beautiful! :)

Our family . . .



Sailor Bunny

Sailor Bunny loves eating biscuits and her favorite sea shanty is The Mermaid



Polka Dot Bunny

Polka Dot Bunny loves picking strawberries with her friends and frolicking in fields of trees and flowers



Victorian Bunny

Victorian Bunny loves to read Oscar Wilde and drink tea sweetened with lots of honey



Thank you

For reading this tutorial, all that is left to do now is to provide your bunny with lots of love and a good home. Kiss their foreheads and hold their little hands- give them pretty clothes to wear and tell them that they are sweet, and they will be your best friend.

**Presentation template was provided by Slidesgo, thank you!*

*“She's the bright blackberry-flower, the fine raspberry-flower,
she's the plant of best breeding your eye could behold:
she's my darling and dear, my fresh apple-tree flower,
she is summer in the cold between Christmas and Easter”*

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